



Speech and Language Therapy & Occupational Therapy Top Tips! For Junior and Senior Infants

Play

- Give your child time to play every day.
- Introduce your child to games you liked when you were a child, e.g. *Ring-a-ring a Rosy*.
- Do puzzles, jigsaws, threading, sewing, or building together with blocks.
- Take turns to act out roles – children love pretend play.
- Give your child lots of opportunities to play games with rules, e.g. *Snakes and Ladders*, *card games*, *bingo*, etc.

Attention and Listening

- Call your child's name to make sure he/she is listening.
- Keep instructions short and simple.
- Break up longer instructions into shorter 'chunks'.
- Support spoken information with visuals, e.g. *gestures*, *pointing*, *pictures*.
- Encourage your child to listen to the world around them on Listening Walks, e.g. "*what can you hear?*".
- Support your child to match sounds and clap out the rhythm in a song or rhyme.

Language

- Encourage your child to explore the world around them, e.g.
 - What shape is the book on the shelf?
 - What does the carpet feel like?
- Encourage your child to describe events that have happened, e.g.
 - What did you see in the garden today?
- Encourage your child to sort and categorise, e.g.
 - Name all the vegetables in the fridge.
 - Name all the items in the cupboard that are not in a jar.
- Encourage your child to think about why we do certain things, e.g.
 - Why do you wear gloves in winter?
 - Why do we put food in the oven?
- Encourage your child to think about time and use different tenses, e.g.
 - What will you do when you go upstairs?
 - What happens when we go to the shops?
- Support your child to label emotions, e.g.
 - Cross - angry
 - Happy - delighted



Screen Time

- Swap screen time for games you played when you were a child.
- Make bedrooms a 'screen-free zone' so remove TVs, computers and all devices.
- Set routine limits with your child(ren) on the amount and type of daily screen time.
- Children like to copy what others do so if you're spending a lot of time on devices or screens, chances are they will want to do that too.
- Have screen-free times as a family. Turn off the TV and devices while eating meals and maybe set other times as screen-free times that suit your family.

Gross Motor Skills

- Running- Pump the arms, and lift the heels off the ground. Stop (before hitting the wall/object/person) and turn.
- Galloping- Hold the reins (join hands in front, peep out through the reins), lead with one leg and foot facing forward.
- Skipping- Aim for high knees. Practise the sequence of 'Step, Hop and Step, Hop and Step', and so on.
- Animal Walks are an excellent activity to develop gross motor skills and can be found with visuals online.
- Provide your child with as many multiple movement experiences as possible to provide them with the opportunity to try a variety of different experiences.

Handwriting



- Make sure that the table and chairs are at the appropriate height for your child's size.
- Your child must be seated with their feet on the floor or on an appropriate support (e.g. stool, footrest)
- The table height should be slightly higher than your child's bent elbow position.
- Use very short pencils, chinks and crayons. Break regular crayons to 1" size. Adult sized pencils can be difficult for children to control. It is better to use a shorter pencil.
- Have your child say the word "space" or "nothing" as they write the word.

Literacy



- Read with your child every day.
- Ask your child to predict what they think might happen in a story as you read it.
- Encourage your child to make marks using a range of materials (e.g. pencils; paint; crayons; chalk).
- Support your child to reinforce the sounds that they are learning in school (e.g. playing 'I Spy'; finding words that begin with the same letter; matching the sounds and the letters).